

Application No. 10/763,151

REMARKS

This amendment is filed in response to the Office Action dated December 19, 2005, in which Claims 1-12 are rejected. Claims 1-12 are hereby canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 13-25 are hereby added. Consideration and allowance of all pending claims is requested.

New claim 13 is directed to a collapsible table comprising a blow-molded table top having an upper surface and a lower surface, a pair of opposing support stands and a pair of articulated support bars. According to claim 13, the support stands are pivotally attached to the lower surface of the table top so they may be positioned in an extended position and a collapsed position. In the extended position, the support stands are disposed substantially perpendicular to the lower surface of the table top. In the collapsed position, the support stands are disposed substantially parallel to the lower surface of the table top. Each support stand comprises a pair of support legs separated by a distance, and a reinforcement member attached to the support legs that spans the distance between the support legs. A substantially C-shaped holder is disposed between the support legs and attached to the reinforcement member.

The support bars each have a first end that is pivotally attached to the lower surface of the table top and a second end that is pivotally connected to a corresponding one of the support stands. The support bars may be positioned in an extended position in which the support bars are disposed at an angle to the lower surface of the table top for bracing the extended support stands. The support bars may also be positioned in a collapsed position in which the support bars are disposed substantially parallel to the lower surface of the table top. When the support stands and support bars are in the collapsed position, the C-shaped holder of each support stand engages the corresponding support bar. This prevents the support stand from inadvertently moving from the collapsed position to the extended position.

Applicants submit that claim 13 patentably defines over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0092445 to Glover et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,959,725 to Lindsay, which combination was cited in the rejection of claim 5. First, Applicants note that the Glover reference describes a fold-in-half table. When its two table halves are folded together (as shown in FIG. 3), the collapsed leg

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units are captured between the two table halves. Since the collapsed leg units are captured between the table halves, there is no need for any other mechanism to secure the collapsed leg units against the bottom of the table. Thus, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify the Glover table by adding the spring tongues (30) and triangular head (27) described in the Lindsay reference. Without the requisite motivation to combine, it would be improper to reject claim 13 based on a combination of the teachings of Glover and Lindsay.

Even if Glover and Lindsay were combined as set forth in the Office Action, the combination would not provide the structure of claim 13. Claim 13 calls for the C-shaped holder to engage the support bar when the support stand and the support bar are in the collapsed position. In the Lindsay reference, the spring tongues (30) engage the triangular head (27) which is attached to the bottom surface of the table top. Lindsay does not describe or suggest engaging the spring tongues to a support bar attached to a support stand.

In fact, Lindsay teaches away from the use of a support bar. In the Lindsay table, the legs are latched into the extended position by the catch mechanisms (20, 21, 25), not by a support bar. Thus, there is no need for a support bar in the Lindsay table and there is no motivation to combine Lindsay with Glover.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 13 patentably defines over Glover et al. in view of Lindsay. Consideration and allowance of claim 13 is requested.

Claims 14-17 depend on claim 13 and recite additional important features of the invention. Thus, claims 14-17 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 13. Consideration and allowance of claims 14-17 is requested.

Support for new claims 18-25 may be found in FIGS. 4-7 and paragraphs 0028-0030 of the application. Applicants submit that no new matter is added in the new claims.

In light of the foregoing discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that a full and complete response to the Office Action is provided herein, and that all of the pending claims are now in condition for full allowance. Action in accordance therewith is respectfully requested.

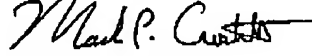
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If the Examiner identifies further issues that may be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (865) 546-4305.

In the event this response is not timely filed, Applicants hereby petition for the appropriate extension of time and request that the fee for the extension along with any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper be charged to our Deposit Account No. 12-2355.

Respectfully submitted,

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on March 1, 2006


Mark P. Crockett